

Child Safe Action Plan

2024-2028



Acknowledgment of Country

Bayside Council acknowledges the Bidjigal Clan, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and work and acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. Bayside Council pays respects to Elders past and present.



Commitments

Child Safe Commitment Statement	4
Background	5
Definition of a Child-Safe Organisation	6
Standards	7
Child Safe Standards	8
■ Standard 1	9
■ Standard 2	10
■ Standard 3	11
■ Standard 4	12
■ Standard 5	13
■ Standard 6	14
■ Standard 7	15
■ Standard 8	16
■ Standard 9	17
■ Standard 10	18

Our Child Safe Commitment Statement

Bayside Council is committed to being a child safe organisation, by embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards into our leadership, governance and organisational culture.

We believe all children have the right to feel safe and be safe.

We acknowledge the significant lifelong impact any form of abuse can have on children and young people, and we strive to ensure they are kept free from harm whilst engaging with our services.

We will engage with our workforce, children, families and specialist agencies to ensure our community is a place where all children and young people feel included, have a voice, are valued, respected and, above all, safe.

We are committed to continuously upskilling our workforce to strengthen awareness and accountability in embedding the standards and identifying and mitigating risks to child safety.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

Bayside Council is a registered agency under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act and remains committed to fulfilling its legislative and regulatory obligations regarding child protection.



Background

In December 2017 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for action to make organisations across Australia safe for children. Among the recommendations from the Royal Commission is the development of the standards to ensure a nationally consistent approach to embedding child safe cultures within organisations that engage with children, and act as a vehicle to give effect to all Royal Commission recommendations.

In December 1990 Australia was one of 194 countries that committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means that organisations and people working with children in NSW share responsibility for keeping children safe.

The head of a Child Safe organisation must ensure the organisation implements child safe standards through systems, policies and processes that may include, but not limited to:

- 1** Statement of the organisation commitment to child safety;
- 2** Child safe policy;
- 3** Code of conduct;
 - a) Employees
 - b) Management
 - c) Contractors
 - d) Volunteers
- 4** Complaint management policy and procedures;
- 5** People and culture policies; and
- 6** Risk management plan.

Ten standards were developed and were legislated in 2021 to ensure that organisations are child safe and underline the premise that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

The implementation of this Action Plan is in progress, and many of the steps below are already underway or have been completed.

Our Action Plan is a strategic document that supports our Bayside 2032 Community Strategic Plan and other planning documents and is closely aligned with our organisations core values as we strive for continuous improvement.

Progress on actions will be reported 6monthly through Bayside's Operations Plan.

Definition of a Child-Safe Organisation

The Office of the Children's Guardian was appointed to provide oversight of the provision of safety, welfare and wellbeing of children through the Children's Guardian Act, in 2019.

The Office of the Children's Guardian defines a child-safe organisation as follows:



Child-safe organisations create cultures, adopt strategies and act to prevent harm to children, including sexual abuse.

The Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians define a child-safe organisation as one that systematically:

- ▶ *Creates conditions to reduce the likelihood of children being harmed;*
- ▶ *Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm; and*
- ▶ *Responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm.*



Starts Here

Child Safe Standards

The Child-Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission provide a framework for ensuring organisations are safe for children. Based on extensive research and consultation, the Standards guide organisations to create cultures, adopt strategies and act to put the interests of children first, to keep them safe from harm and are specifically related to child sexual abuse.

The Office of the Children's Guardian considers organisations in NSW that are implementing the Child Safe Standards. The ten Child Safe Standards are:

- 1 Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
- 2 Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- 3 Families and communities are informed and involved
- 4 Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
- 5 People working with children are suitable and supported
- 6 Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse (or other concerns) are child focussed
- 7 Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe, through ongoing education and training
- 8 Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse or other kinds of harm to occur
- 9 Implementation of the child-safe standards is continuously reviewed and improved
- 10 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

Standard 1



Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders and staff champion a set of core values that inform the organisation's approach to child safety.

The behaviours and practices leaders reward and challenge demonstrate they prioritise the safety of children.

Leaders incorporate child safe risk management into decision-making and actively monitor risks to child safety.

Leaders encourage day-to-day practices that prioritise child safety.

Leaders set clear expectations around child safety and ensure they are followed by staff.

Leaders promote a culture of reporting.

ACTIONS

Develop and embed Bayside Council's Child Safe specific policies and procedures in accordance with the NSW Office Of the Children's Guardian's Guide to Child Safe Standards.

Review and update all relevant Bayside policies and procedures to ensure they are child safety centric.

Business units update and/or develop child safe procedures and practices specific to their business and services provided.

Review and update Bayside Council's risk register (including corporate and business unit) to ensure it addresses child safety.

Upskill and provide ongoing professional development for our workforce including staff, volunteers, students and elected members on child protection and safety.

Review contracts to include Child Safety and distance ourselves from organisations and suppliers who have not put measures in place to work towards being child safe.

Child Protection and Child Safety are included in Council's delivery program and annual operations plan.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Child safety is embedded in day-to-day practices.

Staff follow the Child Safe Code of Conduct and child safe procedures.

Decision-making prioritises children.

Organisational culture creates an environment where it is difficult for abuse to occur.

Staff appropriately respond to and report child abuse.

Children feel safer knowing they have input into the organisation.

Standard 2



Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Children's participation is embedded in organisational practice through feedback opportunities.

Opportunities are created for children to be included in organisational decision-making.

Children are given information on internal and external support services.

Staff are provided with knowledge and skills to support children's participation.

Staff encourage peer support for children.

Adults understand what safety means to children.

Age-appropriate information that describes how adults should behave is provided to children and consistently reinforced.

ACTIONS

Child Friendly posters are developed and displayed at Key Council sites where children visit e.g. libraries, aquatic centres and youth centres so that children know who to talk to if they feel uncomfortable.

Continue to partner with child and family service providers to improve engagement with young people.

Continue to provide mechanisms that engage with and enable participation for children and young people in decisions that impact on them e.g. Youth Advisory Group.

Consult and seek feedback from children and young people when Council is developing plans, strategies, programs, projects and events (e.g. new playgrounds).

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Children know how adults should behave.

Children understand they are listened to and respected.

Children speak up about their safety and the safety of their friends.

Children are aware they can access support services when needed.

Standard 3



Families and communities are informed and involved

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders and staff encourage families to take an active role in keeping children safe.

Policies and procedures (including a Child Safe Code of Conduct and a Child Safe Risk Management Plan) are clearly communicated to parents and carers.

Families and community members are encouraged to provide feedback on how the organisation keeps children safe, and this information is acted upon where necessary.

ACTIONS

Child Safe Information is developed and provided in different formats such as brochures, posters, website and social media to engage, inform and promote child safety to children, families and adults.

Arrange information sessions families (parents/ carers of children) and children regarding child safety.

Distribute information and facilitate information sessions for community and sporting groups to support them to become child safe.

Partner with child and family service providers who are expert in and/or funded to deliver training to improve engagement and child safety awareness.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Families feel welcome.

Families and the community support the organisation to be safer for children.

Families and the community are comfortable asking questions on how the organisation prioritises child safety.

Standard 4



Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders and staff understand barriers that prevent children from disclosing abuse or adults from recognising children's disclosure.

Leaders and staff identify and respect the diverse needs, abilities and backgrounds of children, and understand the value of treating them fairly.

All staff are given information about the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to harm.

Leaders ensure the workforce reflects the diversity of the children it provides services to, where possible.

Leaders and staff adapt activities and services to ensure all children feel included.

ACTIONS

Ensure that policies, procedures and general information on child safety is available in alternate languages and accessible formats upon request.

Partner with local Aboriginal groups and services, disability service providers, and culturally and linguistically diverse groups to implement strategies and workshops that raise awareness and provides information to our diverse community about child protection and child safety.

Develop and deliver a diverse range of programs and activities to ensure all children and young people feel included (e.g. Library Programs, School Holiday Programs, Events).

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Children with diverse needs speak up about concerns around their safety and the safety of their friends, and adults take them seriously.

Children are not disadvantaged by programs and activities.

Organisational culture allows children with diverse needs to feel valued

Adults recognise the value of diversity and inclusion.

Staff feel confident working with diverse groups.

There's increased participation of children with disabilities in the mainstream community.

Standard 5



People working with children are suitable and supported

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders understand recruitment does not rely only on the WWCC, and support ongoing training opportunities for all staff.

Hiring managers are trained in child safe recruitment practices.

Staff recruitment includes job ads that identify your organisation as valuing child safety.

Recruitment processes involve a range of interview questions to establish staff suitability.

Background and reference checks are carried out and recorded.

Supervision includes regular reviews to check whether staff are following codes of conduct and other child safe policies.

Staff, families and the community are aware of recruitment and other child safe practices associated with managing people.

ACTIONS

Bayside Council's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety included in all job advertisements.

Bayside Council's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety included in all child related position descriptions.

Positions descriptions and duty statements are reviewed and updated to ensure expectations are clear about child protection and child safety.

Review recruitment policies and procedures to ensure child safety is included.

Child Safety awareness and learning components (including commitment statement, policies and procedures) are included in induction programs.

Regular Child Safety learning, development and refresher programs are implemented according to position requirements.

Develop and implement strategies to gauge Bayside's workforce and community on the level of child safe awareness.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Staff recruitment and supervision practices prioritise child safety.

Children are safe around staff.

Staff have, or are working towards having, suitable skills and experience to work with children.

Staff attitudes and behaviours create, maintain and improve a child safe culture.

Staff values align with the organisation's commitment to child safety.

Standard 6



Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders create a culture where complaints are taken seriously and all adults take responsibility for the safety of children.

Leaders clearly explain that breaches to their Child Safe Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action.

Staff are given support and information on what and how to report, including to external agencies.

Accessible processes are provided to enable children, staff and others to report complaints.

Procedures describe likely time frames, review processes and potential outcomes of complaints.

Complaints are handled confidentially.

Processes are reviewed regularly and after complaints are made.

Complaint handling procedures are publicly available.

Staff are offered a variety of learning strategies.

Documents are confidential where required.

ACTIONS

Review and update Bayside Complaint Management Policy to ensure it is child centred.

Develop and implement Bayside Council Child Safe Reporting Procedure with clearly outlined roles and responsibilities to dealing with child related concerns, issues, allegations and/or complaints raised.

Training is provided to our Workforce on the Child Safe Policy and Procedures so they know how to identify and mitigate risks and to report if necessary.

Review publicity permission processes for Bayside's workforce to filming and photography for organisational purposes.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

There's an organisational culture where complaints are taken seriously and acted on.

Staff feel supported to raise concerns about child safety.

Children feel safe to raise concerns about themselves or their friends.

Standard 7



Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders provide ongoing education and training opportunities for all staff.

Training provides staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to prevent and identify abuse, and to respond to complaints.

Staff who are involved in roles and situations with higher risk, or who work with vulnerable children, are provided with opportunities for more advanced training.

Where possible the organisation employs a child safety officer who is responsible for training.

Training is regularly reviewed in response to emerging best practices.

Attendance at conferences and other forums are attended to learn about improvements in child safe practices.

ACTIONS

Develop and implement Bayside Council Child Safe Reporting Procedure with clearly outlined roles and responsibilities to dealing with child related concerns, issues, allegations and/or complaints raised.

Ensure that staff are aware and appropriately trained in mandatory reportable conduct. Including how to manage a complaint either made by a child or about a child protection incident.

Implement e-learning modules for all staff.

Update the Intranet with information about what to report and avenues on how and who to report to.

Ensure specialised training is provided to staff working in high risk situations or with vulnerable children.

Support key positions to attend specialist forums, network meetings and conferences on child protection and safety.

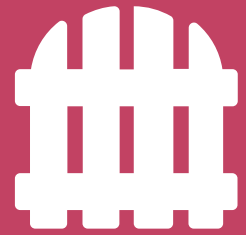
INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Staff feel confident to identify, respond to and report child abuse.

The organisation has a culture of continual learning.

The organisation can demonstrate it stays up to date with emerging best practices.

Standard 8



Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders set expectations about behavioural standards for staff interacting with children in physical and online environments.

Risk assessments identify areas where adults have opportunities to interact with children unsupervised, including for one-off events and overnight camps.

Physical environments are altered to increase natural lines of sight while respecting a child's right to privacy.

Higher-risk areas such as change rooms, cars, boarding facilities and offsite locations are managed using specific safety measures.

Children are provided information about online safety and regularly encouraged to tell staff about negative experiences.

Staff and parents are provided with information about risks in the online environment, such as online grooming, cyber bullying and sexting.

ACTIONS

Review security settings and filters for public Wi-Fi on all public accessible PCs, devices and systems to take appropriate actions to mitigate child safety risks.

Review security settings on devices issued to Bayside's workforce to mitigate child safety risks.

Review and update Council's Electronic Communications Policy and Social Media Policy.

Incorporate Child Safe design into public spaces, including Crime Prevention through Environment Design principles and advice from the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Review and implement processes to ensure Council's promotion and communication material is designed in a child safe manner, protections their privacy and has the appropriate permissions.

Undertake risk assessments of Council's facilities and venues to identify and mitigate child safety risks.

Provide information and partner with specialist agencies to raise awareness and educate children and families about online risks and safety.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Opportunities to harm children are reduced or removed.

Children engage in creative and safe activities.

Children speak up about risks in the online environment.

Children's privacy is balanced with the need to keep them safe.

Standard 9



Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Leaders maintain a culture of continuous improvement to ensure policies and procedures are implemented and routinely reviewed even though staffing may change.

Leaders know the value of continuous monitoring, open conversations and exploring new ways to keep children safe.

Child safe policies and practices are regularly reviewed.

Staff refer to the Standards when creating, reviewing or evaluating child safe policies and procedures.

Leaders and staff review critical incidents to identify the root cause of the problem, identify risks to the safety of children and make improvements.

Children are supported to provide feedback and this information is acted on.

ACTIONS

Child Protection and Child Safety are included in Council's delivery program and annual operations plan.

Conduct an audit of the organisation to:

- ▶ Confirm child related role identification;
- ▶ Identify how each section can comply with the standards; and
- ▶ Access levels of professional development required.

Child Protection Officer are involved in the development and review of relevant policies and procedures.

Develop and implement feedback mechanism to enable children, families, adults and our workforce to provide feedback and suggestions to improve child safety in our organisation.

Child Safe standards are added to the internal audit process.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Leaders and staff are open to change.

Leaders and staff reflect on critical incidents.

The organisational culture creates an environment of ongoing learning and improvement.

Standard 10



Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

APPLYING THE STANDARD

Child safe policies are specific to the organisation and its environment, and they address local risks to the safety of children.

Child safe policies and procedures are publicly accessible.

Child safe policies and procedures are available in child-friendly and accessible formats that pay attention to children's diverse characteristics, cultural background and abilities.

Staff follow child safe policies and procedures.

Documents are saved in accordance with NSW record-keeping requirements.

ACTIONS

Develop and embed Bayside Council's Child safe policy and supporting procedures.

An audit and risk assessment is undertaken by each business unit to assist in reviewing and/or developing child safe procedures and practices specific to the business.

Bayside Council's Child Safe Code of Conduct is embedded in our workforce.

Ensure all child safe policies and information is promoted to children and families and is easily accessible.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Staff and the community understand the organisation's approach to child safety.

Staff and the community know the organisation takes child safety seriously.

Staff, parents and carers know where to find the organisation's child safe policies and procedures.

Staff, parents, carers and the community can use child safe policies and procedures to hold the organisation to account.



Department of Communities and Justice

Child Protection Helpline: 132 111 | <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au>



Telephone Interpreter Services - 131 450

Τηλεφωνικές Υπηρεσίες Διερμηνέων بخدمة الترجمة الهاتفية 電話傳譯服務處 Служба за преведување по телефон



Bayside Council
Serving Our Community

Bayside Customer Service Centres

Rockdale Library, 444-446 Princes Highway, Rockdale
Westfield Eastgardens, 152 Bunnerong Road, Eastgardens
Monday to Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

Phone **1300 581 299 | 9562 1666**

Email **council@bayside.nsw.gov.au**

Web **www.bayside.nsw.gov.au**